

PAX AMERICANA: AMERICA'S BID FOR PERPETUAL PEACE AND HEGEMONY

**A MONOGRAPH
BY
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Infantry**



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ABSTRACT

Pax Americana: America's bid for Perpetual Peace and Hegemony by Major John R. Sutherland III

This monograph analyzes America's ability to maintain its global hegemony and perpetuate freedom from general conventional war. The theories of Geoffrey Blainey and Donald Kagan are used to explain the causes of war and the causes of peace. General Systems Theory is used to explain the systematic interactions and complexity theory is used to explain systems dynamics and instability. Finally operational art is defined using A.A. Svechin and FM 100-7 Decisive Operations.

The fall of the Roman Empire and the failure of Pax Romana is reviewed to identify long term trends and draw parallels to late 20th Century America. Rome is looked at as the prototypical empire.

The failure of Nazi Germany is reviewed to identify trends occurring in a modern day industrial age military empire. Nazi Germany staked its fate on a technologically and tactically superior military force to attain strategic objectives. The review attempts to determine if the United States is pursuing the same technocratic focus. Another source of German failure was ignorance of operational art given up in the pursuit of tactical hyperactivity and opportunism. The Germans were incapable of conducting successive operations in cognitive and physical terms. Is the United States exhibiting the same shortfalls in the 1990's?

The draw down from 1989 to 1999 is reviewed to highlight parallels between the United States, Rome, and Germany. Many disturbing trends and their second and third order consequences are revealed. America's post cold war military strategy is critically reviewed.

Cohen and Gooch's model for measuring military misfortune is applied to assess the United States today. The theory of operational art is also applied to assess whether or not the United States is capable to conduct successive operations given current trends. The decline in military ability and the erosion of operational cognizance seem to point towards a downward trend in America's ability to sustain Pax Americana.

Finally, recommendations are offered to reverse current trends. The USA today has time to recover and pursue its goal of perpetual hegemony and peace or freedom from general, conventional war. To do this, America must convince the world that its power is preeminent. As Blainey posits, peace is attained when nations agree as to the strength of their opponents and as Kagan posits, the ability to make other nations honor your desires equates to the preservation of power. America must project a credible force and the will to use it if it is to retain its current place in the world and if it is to preempt general war.

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Introduction

"Yes, we have slain a large dragon. But we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of."

*R. James Woolsey
Director of the Central Intelligence Agency
1993 - 1995*

A cursory look at over 3,500 years of recorded human history reveals two basic truths about civilization. There is no historic precedence for eternal peace or for the perpetual hegemony of a specific state, nation, or civilization. A study conducted by Will Durant in 1968 found that over a period of 3,421 years of human history, only 268 years were without war². In other words, about 8% of mans time on earth has been totally peaceful. War seems to be here to stay and general war seems to occur regularly in history.

Geoffrey Blainey's study of war found it to be disturbingly regular and unbroken in its occurrence. Russia has had 46 years of war per every 100 since 901 AD and has only experienced one quarter of a century of peace over the past 1000 years. England experienced 56 years of war per every 100 years. For both nations, the quiet years were punctuated by numerous minor wars³. Blainey narrowed his focus to war and peace from 1700 up to today and found two long periods of peace; post Waterloo 1812 to the Crimean War in 1848 and post Franco-Prussian War 1871 to WWI in 1914. Both periods seemed to promise peace and stability and were filled with predictions of the end of war.

History is replete with end of war predictions. Thomas Paine thought universal commerce would "extirpate the system of war", as did John Stewart Mill. Montesquieu and Kant believed that the replacement of the monarchies by republics would end war.

The French Revolution managed to do the former but ignited over 20 years of war on continental Europe thus failing the latter. John Bright believed that the spread of democracy spelled the end of war and Ivan Bloch proclaimed that technology's accelerated speed, range, and accuracy had made war impossible⁴. These predictions were made prior to WWI.

Meanwhile dominant world powers pass exchange places with historic regularity. The United States is trying to accomplish what no other nation has been able to; establish freedom from large-scale war and indefinite global hegemony. The victory of the west over the east, free market economics over command economics, the global expansion of democracy, and the global linkage through telecommunications seems to bode well for American aspirations. Western political liberalism has triumphed over communism and the world is a safer place⁵. Francis Fukuyama observes in his book, The End of History and The Last Man, that the post WWII world has experienced a precipitous decline in all kinds of authoritarian dictatorships and a related proliferation of liberal democracies. He believes that the growing family of liberal democracies are not displaying a desire to seek armed conflict and therefore we may be facing an end to general war although it is too early to be certain at this point⁶.

Are perpetual hegemony and peace impossible? Only history can tell for sure but we have one advantage, 3,500 years of lessons learned. As the world transitions from being a series of relatively isolated nation states with divergent interests into an interconnected "global village" the prospects of an eternal peace appear to be better than ever.

Pax Romana, the imperial peace, was bought with the blood of the Roman Legions and was preserved through their strength. It began in 29 BC when Octavian returned

from Egypt after having defeated Marc Antony and Cleopatra at Actium. It lasted until 162 AD when Marcus Aurelius was confronted with the Eastern War. It ended when neighboring states realized that Rome could be challenged thus validating Blainey's notion that war is precipitated by a disagreement over relative power.⁷

The United States stands on the verge of the new millennia as the world's only perceived super power and is able to declare a Pax Americana⁸. It can be argued that a Pax Americana has been underway for many years now. It might have begun in August of 1945 with the delivery of two atomic bombs in Japan and conventional war became impossible due to the threat of mutual annihilation. It may have begun in October of 1962 when the U.S. faced off the USSR during the Cuban Missile Crisis in perhaps the most dangerous 13 days in world history. The 30 years "long peace" ensued much like the one's Blainey uncovered following Waterloo and the Franco-Prussian War⁹. Pax Americana may have begun with the fall of the Berlin Wall on 22 December 1989, the iron curtain was shattered and America's only peer competitor disintegrated. I tend to favor October '62 as the logical start date for Pax Americana in that American power directly led to resolution of a super power conflict¹⁰. Whatever the date may be, the world seems to be in agreement about relative power and general war has not been required to measure that power¹¹.

The United States stands alone, as the world's only perceived global super power. We appear dominant militarily, economically, technologically, and ideologically and there are no peer competitors now or on the near horizon.¹² Military dominance has been assured through a series of successful military operations over the past decade.

Economic and ideological dominance is demonstrated through the exodus of nations to free market democracy. How long with this trend last? Can it go on indefinitely?

Pax Romana came to an end when the Empire was challenged by an endless series of Barbarian invasions. Rome failed to adapt and the empire collapsed. Throughout their decline the Romans managed to tactically master the barbarians by scoring one battlefield victory after another yet they ultimately failed.

This paper looks at Pax Romana and the striking success of the Roman civilization. The goal is to determine how they lost their edge and to identify indicators that gave rise to the disagreement over power that culminated in Rome's downfall.

If Rome serves as the prototype of a successful empire over time then World War II Germany serves as the prototype of power attained quickly through military excellence in the modern age. This paper looks at the development of the German power between the world wars and assesses the its performance in early World War II. The purpose is to assess the collapse of a military system that nearly conquered all of Europe yet ended up in utter ruin.

With China quietly expanding, the Balkans crises growing, Iraq threatening the middle east, North Korea bordering on a famine induced rampage, and the Commonwealth of Independent States selling off of their Cold War; it's safe to say that the barbarians are restless. Can the United States maintain its position of power given military downsizing and steady budget cuts? Is our power tied to information technology and precision guided munitions? America's actions during the coming decade may well set the course for the next few centuries.

Theory

"Theory then becomes a guide to anyone who wants to learn about war from books; it will light his way, ease his progress, train his judgment, and help him to avoid pitfalls¹³."

Clausewitz

US Military leaders must understand the causes of war if they are to prevent it and maintain the nation's global prominence. The subject has received intense study most of which has had a single war focus and has surfaced symptomatic explanations. Two authors have dug deeper to find universal causes applicable to war in general. Geoffrey Blainey and Donald Kagan have developed closely related theories on the causes of war.

Geoffrey Blainey reviewed all major wars and theories as to their causes from 1700 to today. He sought to define the causes of war and to uncover the causes of peace. His studies revealed a number of "causes"; scapegoats, the search for balance, accidents, and more. He decided that these were merely reflections of ambitions and not the real reasons for war since rivalry and tension driven by ambition can exist in the absence of war. He decided that the cause of war is directly related to the *means* for making war.

Clausewitz stated that war is an extension of politics and that battles were another means to political discourse like exchanging diplomatic notes¹⁴. Robert McNamara would have agreed. He argued that the use of force during the Cuban Missile Crises and in Vietnam was equivalent to communication between nations¹⁵. Both were correct according to Blainey. War is about means and why forceful ones are chosen. Blainey believes the traditional argument that a balance of power averts war is wrong. When

nations were closely matched in military ability, war became more likely. War is more likely when contending nations feel they can successfully challenge each other. When the balance of power is skewed to one nation then the weaker one dare not start a war.

War and peace are opposites of the same issue and are inherently related. If war represents the breakdown in diplomacy then peace represents the breakdown in war. The breakdown in diplomacy leads nations to believe that they have more to gain from fighting than from negotiating¹⁶. This assessment is based on the nation's perception of its capabilities and the capabilities of its opponent. War is then directly related to power and power is best measured through the conduct of war¹⁷.

Wars occur when nations disagree about relative power and peace ensues when nations agree about relative power. If a nation possesses the power to impose its will then it is apt to do so. The decision to go to war hinges on perceptions of seven factors; military strength and the ability to apply it in a given theater, predictions on how other nations will react, perceptions of unity or disunity at home and abroad, knowledge or forgetfulness of the realities of war, nationalism and ideology, the state of the economy and its ability to sustain war, and the personalities and experience of the decision makers¹⁸. The disagreement over power and the status of the seven factors, the Abacus of Power determines if the nation will resort to force to pursue its goals.

Blainey found that nations enter into war with contradictory expectations, both are optimistic that they have more to gain than to loose. The war ends when these expectations diverge. Therefore any factor that causes nations to agree about relative power is a cause for peace. One of the most convincing causes of peace is decisive war since it exploits the use of war as a measure of power and its ends are unambiguous¹⁹.

Blainey states that since 1700 general wars have been long wars yet no war began with both sides believing it would be a long. At least one side thought the war could be won quickly. Many believed that technology would shorten wars but it has not so far. In the absence of long war, our current forty-year peace is normal but an eighty-year peace would take extraordinary measures to maintain. Winning the cold war is good but victory is a wasting asset²⁰. Eventually, someone will disagree about power.

Donald Kagan expanded on Blainey's work through his study of specific conflicts that span from the Peloponnesian Wars up to the Cuban Missile Crises. Kagan concludes that war is a competition for power²¹. He adds to Blainey's theme with the discussion of contested power which, alone is neutral, although its effect is critical. To understand power, it must be defined. Kagan sees power as the capacity to bring about desired ends. Clausewitz would see this as the ability to impose one's will. Alternately power provides the ability to resist the demands and compulsions of others. To preserve freedom of will is to retain power.

Kagan attempts to answer the question of why nations choose force. Instead of seeing the specific seven factors that Blainey derived, Kagan identified three closely related general causes first illuminated by Thucydides who said that nations go to war for "honor, fear, and interest"²². All are interrelated with honor in the pivotal position.

That fear and interest motivate war is of no surprise but the motive of honor is more perplexing. Why should honor be so important? If a nation is honored, then its wishes are respected. Honor is the embodiment of power. When honor is in decline so is power²³. Even if a nation retains high material power it must also retain honor. If attitudes change and the nation's wishes are ignored then its "real" power is in decline.

This happens most frequently when a powerful nation is perceived as lacking the will to employ its material power. If a nation is not willing to pay the price to maintain its honor then it is subject to losing it. If Kagan is right, challenges to national interest equate to a decline in power and influence.

Blainey and Kagan conclude that war is based on power. When the community of nations agrees about power, there is peace and then they disagree, there is war. War is the outward measure of power while honor is subtle non-violent measure of power. Success is the ability to maintain agreement over power and to elicit other nations to honor your wishes. If power becomes debatable or desires are not honored, the nation is in danger of declining power that might need to be re-measured through war.

Blainey and Kagan illustrate a complex network of concerns as to the causes of war. The question is how to deal with this network or system? Systems analysis rose to prominence during WWII when scientists took the lead in weapons development²⁴. For example, the creation of the atom bomb required systematic study to transform theoretical fission into real fission.²⁵ Growing complexity gave rise to General Systems Theory. Ludwig Von Bertalanffy formalized this approach by publishing *General System Theory* in the late sixties²⁶.

A key principle of systems theory is the recognition of *wholeness* which is the realization that a system is a combination of many parts. The parts are interrelated and interdependent and do not act alone or in isolation. The behavior of the system is defined by the behavior of its parts. It is hierarchical since some parts are subordinate to others and all are subordinate to the systems *purpose*²⁷. Systems analysis develops systematic solutions versus symptomatic solutions by revealing the cause and effect trail and by

exposing the exchange of information through input and feedback regulated by the systems purpose²⁸.

Shimon Naveh equates purpose to the aim of the system and is the systems control mechanism²⁹. The aim gives purpose to the interactions of the parts. They behave within the context of the purpose and are not unlimited in what they can do.

There are two general categories of systems and they are regulated differently. One is mechanistic and discreet while the other is dynamic and expansive. The closed system is mechanistic and is doomed to eventual death while the open system is dynamic and may evolve in any number of ways.

A Closed System is isolated from the environment. The closed system archetype is useful for development of machines and mechanisms that are designed to execute a specific function. Closed systems seek equilibrium and are governed by entropy, meaning they cease to change once balance is achieved³⁰. Its behavior is mechanistic and linear in that it cycles through a series of discreet interdependent steps until it reaches a stable state where it ceases to adapt.

Open Systems are dynamic systems that interact with the environment. They are characterized by a continuous flow of information that spurs growth and adaptation. Open systems avoid equilibrium since equilibrium is the end of dynamism. According to Mitchell Waldrop, all living systems are open systems since they interact with and adapt to their surroundings³¹. Open systems are nonlinear because their innumerable interaction with other systems and the environment can generate any number of possible outcomes. This systems acts to its advantage within the environment.

All living systems are dynamic and open. They adapt to changing situations and generate unexpected or unintended outcomes. Change and fluctuation are their natural state, they operate on the *edge of chaos* and require deeper explanation than is found in general systems theory³². Complexity theory fills the void.

John Casti calls *Complexity Theory* the science of surprise because instability is the essence of the real world.³³ The world is a network of open systems consisting of a multitude of variables and interactions that are neither random nor linear since outcomes are related to one another but are also affected by the environment.

Complexity theory states that small deviations can lead to major changes in the outcome³⁴. This is true because complex systems contain so many variables that they are inherently unstable. Long term trends can be predicted but only short-term effects can be forecasted³⁵. A small deviation can drastically change the weather due to its magnification over time³⁶. Absolute certainty is impossible although approximation is possible³⁷. The survival of the system is dependent on its ability to *adapt* to its environment, *anticipate* the impact of small changes, and *learn* from its experiences. The system is sensitive to its initial conditions and is cognizant of the potential impact of adjustments it makes in relation to the systems purpose.

If a nation's purpose is to ensure agreement over its power then its military must be seen as a credible extension of that power. The military must *adapt* to the changing threats to the nation and *anticipate* the impact of its response to those threats. It must *learn* from its past and apply those lessons to the future. Operational art is the tool that enables military systems to link national aims provided by strategy to the component parts provided by tactics.

“Great battles now in fact do not take place. Combat actions are broken down in time and space into a series of separate combats, forming an operation, the research of which cannot be the subject of tactics³⁸.”

A.A. Svechin

The history of war has revolved around two polar ends; strategy and tactics³⁹.

Strategy is concerned with the raising of armies and navies and the determination of how they will be used in the event of war⁴⁰. Strategy is nonlinear, conceptual, and artistic in nature. Tactics encompasses the employment of men and machines to win engagements and battles. Tactics is predominately mechanistic, concrete, and scientific in nature. Until recently, historically speaking, this was enough.

Operational art is the mosaic of activities that overlaps strategy and tactics. It links the two levels in a manner that provides meaning to the tactical level by ensuring that engagements and battles are related to the strategic end state⁴¹. Employment of operational art involves the selection of which battles to fight or decline and ensures that tactical engagements contribute to the strategic end state. Operational art seeks to develop an interrelated series of distributed, sequential, or successive engagements dispersed over time and space to accomplish strategic objectives or intermediate operational objectives. Operational art is the systems approach to war. It is holistic, purposeful, adaptive, and hierarchical as a linkage between tactics and strategy.

An excellent example of the comparison between tactics and operational art can be found in the Civil War. In July 1863 two great struggles were taking place in the United States of America, one tactical and another operational. Gettysburg was a tactical clash between Lee and Meade and Vicksburg was an operational clash between Pemberton and

Grant. Gettysburg consisted of several engagements spread over three days resulting in a victory in battle for the Union. Lee fought on for two more long and bloody years. As related to strategy, Gettysburg was important but not decisive.

At Vicksburg, Grant wove a series of related tactical engagements over time that contributed to his ultimate objective of seizing Vicksburg. His actions were distributed in time, width, and depth. He regulated his tempo to maintain pressure when it was relevant and used deception to divert enemy attention. Grant utilized operational art to overcome his opponent over a period of eight months⁴². As related to strategy, Vicksburg cut the Confederacy in half and eliminated the major line of communication to the east coast, the Mississippi River and the Railroad it fed. Vicksburg directly contributed to the demise of the Confederate States of America.

Do we seek the decisive battle of Meade or the decisive operations of Grant? A.A. Svechin argued that an army built for the decisive battle was an army that had no room for error. Decisive battle requires focus on destruction as the goal and requires the conduct of large scale, immediate, lightening actions. Destruction requires industry in place to sustain the war effort versus mobilization since it relies on short wars. Failure of the initial operations would expose the system as adventurism and failure⁴³.

Shimon Naveh argues that the massification of armies and the grand application of technology led to dispersion and made it impossible to win wars through decisive battles⁴⁴. Destruction became impossible therefore the military and the state had to design a series of small successes whose sum total would equate to strategic victory.

If destruction is impossible and short wars between mass armies is unlikely then a short war mentality is doomed to failure. Combat actions must be planned over time and

space as cumulative events versus being acted out as a single series of destructive blows.

This is the essence of operational art, the denial of the importance of the single decisive engagement in favor of combat as an ongoing and episodic process⁴⁵.

To accomplish the transition from single battle focus to operational focus, the commander must recognize and master the cognitive tension between the tactical level and the operational level⁴⁶. On the tactical level, the commander desires to take any action required to win engagements and battles. On the operational level, the commander subordinates the engagement and battle to the larger goals dictated by the strategy. There are times when the tactical situation is irrelevant in the grand scheme.

According to the Army's operational manual, Decisive Operations FM 100-7, there are several key elements to operational art. First is the identification of the center of gravity (COG). Clausewitz defines the COG as the "hub of all power and movement upon which everything depends⁴⁷." The center of gravity is the point upon which force is concentrated. It serves as an analytical tool for the design of operations. The strategic COG is the ultimate goal since it is the essence of the enemy's power, the goal in war according to Blainey and Kagan. Operational COG's are intermediate sources of power that reduce the strategic COG. They are stepping-stones to the strategic COG.

Another key component is the decisive point. The decisive point provides the commander with a significant advantage. It is an effect, time, or place where the commander gains the relative combat advantage and begins to win. The decisive point is the focus of the main effort and is the key to the seizure or protection of the COG⁴⁸.

The strategic COG provides the system with its aim by defining the enemy source of power. Actions oriented at operational COG's weaken the strategic COG. Actions at

decisive points (DP's) weaken operational COG's. Like a complex system, the agents are interconnected and guided by a dominant aim. Several subordinate issues impact on the ability to pursue COG's and DP's.

Blainey's seven factors measure a nation's ability to sustain combat. In operational art, this ability is defined as the culmination point. This is the point in time and / or space where a force becomes overextended and its combat power no longer exceeds that of the opponent⁴⁹. The attacker culminates when his strength no longer exceeds the defender and he is forced to transition to the defense to reconstitute and resupply. The defender culminates when he is no longer able to retain terrain or transition to the offense to defeat the attacker. Estimation of the culmination point is critical to operational art. The operational artist designs actions that allow him to seize decisive points *before* his combat power diminishes. To exceed the culmination point is to transition from risk from which you can recover to gambling where you might not recover.

Operational art is anticipatory and adaptive. The branch plan is the key to anticipation and adaptation. Branches are changes of disposition, orientation, and direction, within the framework of the original intent and mission. When the original path is no longer plausible or an opportunity arises, the branch provides an alternate path to success. Branches preserve freedom of action⁵⁰.

Finally, operational art links engagements through the sequel. The sequel is the next mission predicated on the success, failure, or stalemate of the current mission. Sequels maintain the overall aim and continue the orientation on the COG. A sequel is a new mission and intent that includes the decision to accept or decline further engagements⁵¹.

A truly operational plan includes the elements of operational design oriented on the enemy source of power that adapts, anticipates, and learns. Operational art is systematic and adaptive. It works over an extended period of time and space. Operational art is the tool that links military action to strategic goals and enemy sources of power while protecting friendly sources of power.

Blainey and Kagan identify war as a contest over power. General Systems Theory and Complexity Theory provide a theoretical framework for solving complex problems and operational art provides the cognitive tools and linkage for practical application of military means to achieve strategic ends. A nation that wants to preserve its peaceful and dominant position in the world must assess its power, integrate the entire system into its actions, and utilize all of the elements of operational art to pursue victory through adaptation, anticipation, and learning. A quick, tactically oriented, solution is no longer to be counted on.

Rome

The Emperor Octavian, a.k.a. Augustus Caesar, ushered in Pax Romana by defeating Egypt at the Battle of Actium in 29 BC Rome had conquered its last peer competitor and ended the threat of large scale war. Rome had gained total hegemony and relative peace through superior military strength and internal stability.

The newly won peace allowed Augustus to reduce the size of his army from 500,000 to 300,000 mostly stationed on the frontier⁵². This small force effectively countered the collective threat of several million barbarians through superior training, organization, and discipline. As long as Rome retained these qualities, she would stay on top.

The Roman peace lasted some 170 years. The peoples of the civilized world wanted to be like the Romans. They wanted to join the empire, enter its markets, enjoy the security it provided, and adopt its form of rule.

Julius Caesar established Rome's borders along the Rhine River and Augustus expanded them to the Danube⁵³. He decided that the Empire would not be secure from the fierce Teutonic tribes of Germany until he could push the boundary to the Elbe. The goal was to cordon the border along naturally defensible barriers; however Augustus was thwarted in his goal to conquer Germany due to a disastrous defeat. The expansion into Germany brought Rome face to face with its ultimate destiny.

In 9 A.D., General Varus led 3 legions into the Teutoberg Forest. His force consisted of a 20,000-man contingent and 10,000 family members and baggage handlers. They were assaulted, guerrilla style, by hordes of German warriors. When word reached Varus that his garrison was under siege, he turned the army north and headed for the coast. He never made it. Augustus lost central Germany and had to settle for the Rhine and Danube borders. This defeat was the precursor to Rome's eventual fall⁵⁴.

The Battle of Teutoberg Forrest was one of history's defining moments in that it ended the expansion of Rome and left their northern frontier exposed to the Germanic tribes. Rome concluded its establishment of natural frontiers following this battle and settled into the long defense with a professional Army of 25 legions and Auxiliaries consisting of some 250,000 troops. In spite of the defeat dealt by the Germans, Rome persisted in their belief that the Parthians posed the greatest threat to the empire⁵⁵.

By 200 AD, the German tribes had united in a loose confederation and began to exert pressure on Rome's frontier to the north. Their first consolidated push was against

Marcus Aurelius and it ended Pax Romana as Rome's first real crises in nearly 200 years.

These invasions into Austria and northern Italy prompted the expansion of the army under Septimus Servius. Rome had held the barbarians at bay and began to assimilate them under the Emperor Trajan who allowed settlement within the empire.

In 212 A.D., Caracalla ended a great motivation to serve in the legions by extending citizenship to all freeborn inhabitants of Rome. Prior to this decree, military service was a vehicle of upward mobility since service was rewarded with citizenship. There was no more incentive to serve and the status of the legions in society began to decline.

In the Third Century the barbarians battered the frontiers weakening the cordon defense emplaced by Augustus. Rome prevailed through the superior quality of the legions but the endeavor was costly and prompted the emperor Diocletian to raise taxes and end social mobility to maintain the army. He did the latter by locking sons into the profession of their fathers thereby ensuring a ready-made pool of soldiers to fill the ranks of the legions. Even with these measures in place, Diocletian and his ancestors were forced to accept widespread use of barbarians within the legions⁵⁶. This infusion of barbarian Roman soldiers allowed the barbarians to become more Romanized while causing the Romans to become more diluted.

Service in the army was increasingly perceived as servitude, a sentence to the doldrums of frontier duty, isolation, and low pay. Roman citizens no longer saw it as a privilege to serve and the need for barbarian conscripts grew⁵⁷. Constantine finally allowed barbarians to settle within the empire under self rule. The barbarians made up the majority of the armed forces by the time of Theodosius the Great.

Diocletian instituted the Tetrarchy to solve the problem of succession and to ease the burden of rule in the east and west. The Tetrarchy consisted of four rulers, two for the east and two for the west. An *Augustus* was in charge and a *Caesar* was his assistant and eventual replacement. Diocletian also built a central reserve. Two new soldiers emerged among the legion's ranks and they contributed to the decline in professionalism within the army. The first new recruits were tribal, barbarian units known as *federati*. These units did not train or succumb to Roman military tradition. Next came the short term *pro rata* soldiers provided by wealthy landowners to fill the dwindling manpower of the legions. These men were pressed into service by their landowners for a shorter period than was served by professional *legionnaires*. They added to the growing apathy towards training and general erosion of discipline⁵⁸.

While Diocletian's reforms enhanced stability they set the stage for the eventual division of the empire by promulgating divergent goals and disunity within the army. The Roman shared vision began to polarize between east and west and the army's shared vision began to be divided between frontier troops and the central reserve.

Constantine followed Diocletian to power. He vigorously introduced numerous military reforms and strategy changes. He reduced the actual number of troops in the legion from 5000 to 1000 and eliminated the vaunted Praetorian Guards⁵⁹. He introduced increased specialization that tended to focus the best training in the units farthest from the borders. This was a result of the strengthening the central reserve, which was then called the Mobile Strike Force⁶⁰.

Constantine decided to keep the highest quality troops in the central reserve while the lower quality troops defended along the border⁶¹. His new defense in depth replaced the

old cordon defense and equated to the abandonment of the frontier. It was left vulnerable to the ravages of barbarian invasions. The infrastructure along the frontier was exposed to the abuses of sporadic invasions. With the posting of the best troops in the reserve, the frontiers were needlessly exposed to the enemy and confidence fell along the borders.

The central reserve fought as part of an elastic defense, preserving the interior of the empire while only recapturing already abused frontier provinces⁶². The strike force left created only transitory effects. The frontier would not feel truly secure again.

Constantine reorganized the military and reoriented Roman Strategy during his reign. He also paved the way for Rome's eventual downfall⁶³.

The emperor Valens who soon met with a major threat from the east succeeded Constantine. In 376 A.D. the Huns attacked the Visigoths in the east and pushed them into Rome. Seeking a place to live, the Visigoths negotiated with the emperor Valens to enter Rome and settle down unarmed. The 200,000 strong Goth community soon became restless and rose up against Valens. They defeated him at Adrianople, Rome's worst defeat since Cannae. After Adrianople, the Goths turned on Constantinople but could not capture it though they were able to roam freely in Thrace. Theodosius succeeded Valens, who was killed at Adrianople. The new emperor of the east pursued the Goths for four years. Tiring of the chase, Theodosius broke precedent and offered to allow the Goths to establish an armed and autonomous nation within Rome. In return the Goths would serve as federate⁶⁴. Armed barbarians had never before wandered within Rome legally and without supervision. Soon the new federate would siege Rome itself.

The barbarians' role in the army reached its peak under Theodosius the Great. His reign reflects the true barbarianization of the Roman legions. Romans were increasingly

reluctant to serve so Theodosius turned to his newest citizens to fill the ranks. The influx of barbarians accelerated the decline in training, a past time not suited to Goths or Vandals.

The barbarian legions fought bravely under Theodosius. One of his most trusted generals was the Visigoth Alaric. He played a pivotal role in the Battle of Frigid River where Theodosius defeated Arbogast and became sole emperor of Rome. Theodosius failed to honor Alaric for his role in the great victory. He died a few months later leaving Alaric unrecognized. Alaric went on the warpath before the year was out.

Theodosius died leaving Rome equal in size and influence to the empire of Augustus but it was an empire that had been infiltrated by barbarians. Meanwhile, Rome remained preoccupied with the threat from Persia. Persia was a traditional empire that mirrored Rome. Although weaker, they were fierce and aggressive in the east. Unlike the barbarians, the Parthian Empire of Persia was viewed as a conventional power. This obsession with the east divided the empire when it most needed to be united.

Rome needed strong leadership in the face of the dual threats from the east and west. Instead they got Theodosius' sons, Honorius in the west and Arcadius in the east⁶⁵. They were weak, petty, and distrustful. Theodosius left General Stilicho as the regent in the west though he saw himself as the protector of all of Rome. Arcadius did not trust Stilicho and his political intrigue diverted attention away from victory against Alaric.

Alaric made his first move from his home in Thessaly towards Constantinople. Stilicho rallied the legions of the east and west and moved on Alaric. He cornered him but failed to deliver a decisive blow. Arcadius subsequently withdrew his legions' support, which allowed Alaric to escape. Arcadius denied Stilicho from attaining fame

and Stilicho failed to perceive Alaric's persistence. Alaric moved south from the Balkans into Greece. Once again, it was Stilicho to the rescue. He surrounded the Visigoths and cut them off from their supplies but once again, failed to finish them off. While Stilicho's troops were sacking the Goth base camp, Alaric escaped⁶⁶.

Stilicho's lack of operational design prevented him from accepting and exploiting battles at critical times. He inflicted a series of meaningless tactical setbacks upon Alaric but never connected those tactical engagements into an operation that could defeat the Goths and secure the empire. Stilicho's tactical focus was aggravated by his Army's lack of training and discipline to such a degree that if he had pursued an operational approach, he would not have been able to execute it.

Between 399 A.D. and 401 A.D. Stilicho met Alaric in battle five times. He won on every occasion but always withdrew prior to defeating the Visigoths. The Romans forced the enemy back after several costly drawn out engagements. Alaric was beaten but not defeated. In the end, the tactical victories only weakened the Romans further and drained their coffers without diverting the enemy from his aim. Alaric was willing to suffer.

In 401 A.D. Alaric marched into Italy. Stilicho advanced to meet him and, once again, routed them while failing to pursue when the army lost control to looting. Stilicho forced another battle at Verona where he won again but, again, could not pursue due to the lack of discipline in the Army and his own lack of resolve⁶⁷.

Alaric was temporarily driven from Italy but another barbarian attacked in his place with double the numbers. This time Stilicho won a decisive victory. Outnumbered 10 to 1, he cornered the enemy in a valley where he starved them out and massacred them.

By 406 Stilicho was the hero of Rome when he faced a breakthrough along the Rhine and the return of Alaric. The former was a consequence of the latter. Stilicho had stripped the border of troops to mass against Alaric and had left the frontier uncovered. As the Romans massed in Italy, the barbarians poured over the frozen Rhine to seize Gaul. The Western Empire was being assaulted from all directions. Honorius requested help from his brother Arcadius only to be refused. Arcadius would not expose his flank to Persia.

Stilicho offered bribes to Alaric to calm his passions and attempted another alliance with him aimed at blunting the incursions into Gaul. Alaric negotiated and kept raising his demands proving to be insatiable. Stilicho's negotiations were deemed machinations against the empire and he was executed. He never understood his opponent and never devised an operational strategy to defeat them. Stilicho counted on a series of unrelated tactical victories to discourage his enemy. His victories created minor and transitory effects and failed to save Rome.

Stilicho fought Alaric in the east and in the west, often catching his army and defeating it in battle. Stilicho's desire to make Alaric an ally caused him to reduce the pressure he placed on him. Meanwhile the west never received aid from the east. Arcadius did not want to help his brother or further empower his ambitious General Stilicho. Much like the Confederates during the Vicksburg campaign, the two sides could not coordinate their efforts. The end result was Alaric's sacking of Rome in 410 A.D. for the first time in over 800 years⁶⁸. The federates in the west had proven their ability to bring the empire to its knees and began to eye autonomy. By 476 A.D. the barbarians had managed to carve up the western empire to establish their own kingdoms..

Stilicho won brilliant victories against the barbarians but lacked an operational overview. His tactical victories were short lived and the enemy was left intact and focused on their aims. Stilicho's failure to destroy Alaric empowered all of the barbarians and paved the way for the fall of Rome.

Michael Grant states that Rome fell because the Army was no longer able to perform its mission⁶⁹. Rome's army failed on multiple levels. Declining manpower was harmful since it led to the inclusion of barbarians. The army fluctuated in size over the centuries but the decline in the quality of the troops and the training was much more ominous.

The Romans allowed their superior discipline, organization, and training to decline to a fatal point. The infusion of barbarian troops who held different values than the general populace contributed to this slide in quality. The lack of discipline is evident in the army's of Stilicho when he could not organize a pursuit due to looting.

The widening gap between the military and the citizens of Rome was evidenced by the inability of Rome to raise new legions without hiring the "enemy". The average citizen no longer saw service as a means of social mobility or as a desirable profession. Only troops of the central reserve received good pay. The Army lowered its standards for recruiting, created shorter obligations, and reduced the rigors of training. This is exemplified by the evolution of frontier posts where the ancient legions sallied forth to do battle as opposed to the later posts which were designed to act as fortifications to be defended from within.

Vegetus highlighted the declining quality of training in his historic book in which he tried to resurrect the ancient training and organization techniques⁷⁰. Anonymous searched for technical solutions to new Roman weakness. Neither got it right; neither a

return to the past nor the infusion of mechanized war devices would rescue the legions.

They lacked martial spirit and a connection to their people. The Clausewitzian Trinity between the government, the people, and the military, was broken⁷¹.

Specialization and de-emphasis of frontier defense weakened the empire at the tactical and strategic levels. The Mobile Strike Force was paid differently than the rest. The abandonment of a cordon defense to a defense in depth exposed the frontiers since the mobile reserve could not react to trouble spots quickly enough to prevent damage.

Rome's strategic mistake was its Persian focus. Rome never wavered in its overall view that Persia posed the greatest threat to the empire. The Persian empire organized like Rome as opposed to the disorganized Teutonic tribes. They prepared for the fight they wanted rather than the fight they got. This lack of balanced vision divided the empire in time of need. The Eastern Empire was not willing to weaken its forces to support the west. Rome lacked a shared vision⁷².

Kaplan would point towards Rome's dissolving and meaningless boundaries. To be within Rome was not necessarily to be Roman. When Constantine let the Visigoths settle in Rome, he legitimized alternate worldviews, lifestyles, and values.

Kagan would see that the Romans never concluded a satisfactory peace with the barbarians. They allowed Vandals and Goths to settle within their borders but did not treat them as equals or reward them such as in the case of Alaric. There was always a source of conflict that required decisive action but was met with accommodation.

Perhaps the most staggering military failure was the lack of operational vision. Rome courted the enemy rather than planning to impose its will upon them. Like Theodosius, Stilicho accommodated the barbarians when he should have dealt with them decisively.

Stilicho maneuvered Alaric into battle. He defeated him. Then he allowed him to escape. He had no over arching aim. His tactical successes were unrelated to each other. Alaric was free to continue to pillage. Stilicho does not seem to have realized that Alaric wanted a kingdom of his own as opposed to an alliance within the existing empire. An operational plan would have made this interpretation irrelevant since it would have pushed Alaric into a strategic position that favored the empire. Lack of operational cognition made Roman victory against a determined foe unlikely. Superior numbers and equipment could not overcome superior vigor and vision. Blainey would say that Rome allowed the barbarians to challenge their power through their own irresolute action⁷³.

Germany

“In brief, the whole future of warfare appears to me to lie in the employment of mobile armies, relatively small but of high quality... A conscript mass, whose training has been brief and superficial, is ‘cannon fodder’ in the worst sense of the word, if pitted against a small number of practiced technicians on the other side⁷⁴.”

*General Hans von Seeckt
Chief of Staff of the Reichswehr
1919 - 1926*

Germany's warfighting tradition is storied one influenced by two realities; geography and population. Germany was physically surrounded and outnumbered by potential opponents. Their dilemma was how to win a two front war quickly. Frederick the Great faced this problem during the Seven Years War when he faced Austria and Russia to the east and France to the west. He dealt with one threat at a time in rapid succession. He had to forgo decisive strategic victory to attain quick tactical victories⁷⁵. In the process,

he became the first great captain of modern times, made Prussia great, and became the role model for Napoleon. His pragmatic and *opportunistic* approach guided Germany for the next two centuries.

Helmut von Moltke the Elder also faced multiple threats on multiple fronts. He used technology to leverage victory. He used the railroads to concentrate his forces and the telegraph to control them⁷⁶. His decisive victories against the Austrians in 1866 and the French in 1870 brought back the Napoleonic decisive battle. Moltke's added the *technocratic* approach to the German military ethos.

Alfred von Schlieffen believed the decisive battle, or the general engagement, could win wars. His plan for the double envelopment of France was designed to encircle and annihilate their Army in one movement⁷⁷. It was inspired by the “battle” of Cannae⁷⁸. The Schlieffen plan was tactics writ large that ignored the likely culmination of the “wings”. It lacked *operational context* and was merely a way to exploit mass tactically⁷⁹.

It fell upon Eric von Ludendorf to solve the stalemate of the trenches that ensued when the Schlieffen plan failed. He adopted storm troop infiltration tactics on a grand scale⁸⁰. Ludendorf's 1918 Offensive was a testament to the new tactics but it lacked operational depth and strategic aim. It seemed that the attack was made simply because it was possible, it was an exhibition of *tactical hyperactivity*.

Hans von Seeckt became the Commander in Chief of the German Army following WWI. He rebuilt the Reichswehr with technical and tactical superiority as his goal. He would overwhelm any opponent with superior forces supported by airpower and mobile artillery⁸¹. He believed his strike force, like Constantine's central reserve, would react quickly and render mass armies impotent⁸². Heinz Guderian put von Seeckt's vision on

tracks by introducing the tank. He sought quick moving battles of annihilation to attain strategic ends. The dialogue over how to use tanks led the military to adopt a hyper-aggressive tactical mode of response to meet strategic demands⁸³.

In August 1939 Germany decided to crush Poland before France and England could respond and in so doing intimidate Eastern Europe. French-Anglo inactivity combined with the Russian non-aggression pact made it safe for a German invasion. Rundstedt's Army Group South would strike east to Warsaw. Bock's Army Group North would sever the Polish Corridor to establish a link with East Prussia. He would then turn south on Warsaw. Two great encirclements would annihilate the Polish Army; one on the Vistula and the other on the Bug. German aims would be met in a single general engagement.

By September 1 1939 Germany had amassed 1 ½ million troops on the Polish border. They faced a Polish Army arrayed in a cordon defense reminiscent of WWI. Their disposition and lack of armor guaranteed their failure⁸⁴. At 0440 hours Bock attacked in the North while Rundstedt struck in the West. The two Groups slashed through the six surprised Polish Armies and destroyed their air force by the third day. The inner ring closed on the Vistula by the fifth day and the outer ring closed on the Bug by the eleventh day. The Poles were trapped in a classic *Kesselschlacht* and were quickly beaten.

Poor performance and old equipment doomed the Polish to defeat in a single series of engagements. The tank dive-bomber team was validated and the lack of operational context beyond a single series of battles was codified by experience.

Having secured their eastern flank, the Nazi's turned their attention west. Their next enemies were as compliant as the Polish had been; England and France also intended to re-fight WWI. Capitalizing on their perceived WWI strengths, the French turned to

fortifications the to stop the Germans. They built the Maginot Line, a string of fortifications that ran from Switzerland to Sedan. They expected a repeat of the Schlieffen Plan that they would break on the Maginot and Dyle River lines.

The original version of Plan Yellow was similar to the Schlieffen Plan just as France expected⁸⁵. It focused on seizing airfields in Holland and Belgium for use against England. Erich von Manstein, Chief of Staff of Army Group A, believed the plan would end up drawing all the armored forces in the Low Countries where they would bog down in another attrition war. He set out to avert a mechanized repeat of WWI.

Manstein's first revision was to shift the main effort to Belgium while respecting Holland's neutrality however this was only a slight improvement. His final plan was to lead off with an invasion of Holland and Belgium to draw the allies north. Bock's Army Group B with 30 divisions would invade the Low Countries. Rundstedt's Army Group A 45 Divisions and a spearhead of 7 Panzer divisions would slash through the Ardennes Forrest to cut the allies in half. Leeb's Army Group C of 19 divisions would fix the enemy in the south along the Maginot Line. The Germans would annihilate the isolated allied armies north of Sedan, and then they would turn south to finish off the remaining forces⁸⁶. The plan capitalized on surprise and armor mobility in an inaccessible region.

The allied plan played right into the German's hands. Once the invasion began, four armies north of Sedan would pivot to the Dyle River Line in Belgium. Pre-positioning in Belgium or Holland was impossible due to their neutrality. The French stripped away their reserves to allow them to extend the line to the north.

On May 10, 1940 Germany launched the invasion of France, Holland, Luxembourg, and Belgium. Bock's Army Group B assaulted Holland and Belgium. By 12 May he

drew the French and British to the Dyle Line as planned. Also on the 12 May Army Group A under Rundstedt struck through the Ardennes towards Sedan and Dinant. The Ardennes sector was weakly covered and was easily overwhelmed.

German objectives past the Meuse River were ill defined and their success caught them off guard. This lack of operational context caused confusion as Guderian and Rommel lunged forward leaving the infantry behind. Rundstedt wanted the armor to slow down to allow the infantry to seal the encirclements and secure the flanks.

Holland fell in 5 days and Belgium lost the crossings over the Albert Canal when Eben Emael was destroyed. By 11 May Belguim fell back on the Dyle line and the British and French had moved up to join them the next day. Rundstedt's attacked on 12 May and by the 15 May; Bock was probing the Dyle Line. The trap was sprung.

By the 16 May the French 9th Army was shattered and a 50-mile hole was ripped in the allied line isolating the four armies on the Dyle. Guderian and Rommel raced ahead making their commanders grow nervous. Rundstedt finally stopped Guderian but he managed to manipulate his instructions to get going again the next day. Cambrais, Arras, and Calais fell in rapid succession and by 24 May the allies were encircled at Dunkirk and under pressure from 5 panzer divisions. Hitler ordered a remarkable two-day halt. Rundstedt approved due to his concerns about preparations for the next battle to occur in the south⁸⁷. When the halt order was lifted, British defenses were improved and they were able to evacuate by the June 5th. Petain sued for peace on 17 June.

In 1940, the opposing armies were nearly equal in size yet the Germans were concentrated while the allies were dispersed⁸⁸. Manstein's Plan caught the allies by surprise. The allies were lethargic, lacked will, and exhibited poor leadership. As

impressive as the German victory was, it was not perfect. It lacked operational context as embodied by vague direction after crossing the Meuse. Direction and objectives were determined ad hoc by tactical commanders like Guderian and Rommel⁸⁹.

Operations in Poland and France had pitted the Wehrmacht against weak willed opponents armed with inferior doctrine, equipment, and poorly trained forces. These conditions led to quick victory achieved in a single series of tactical engagements. Germany came to rely on tactical means to attain strategic ends. They did not need to worry about successive operations, culmination, or branch plans. The decisive battle of annihilation or Kesselschlacht was a proven winner.

Hitler's ultimate goal was to gain living space, or *Lebensraum*, in the east. Russia was the designated donor⁹⁰. Poland and France had bred such overconfidence that Hitler stated that Russia was decaying from within and that one had only to kick in the door for the whole rotten structure to collapse⁹¹. The Army Chief of Staff, General Halder, said that the word "impossible" was stricken from the Wehrmacht's vocabulary⁹². Hitler and his generals failed to see the expanse of Russia for what it is; a great army consuming funnel. Russia is narrow in the west and wide in the east thus causing the front to expand at the very moment that the lines of communications (LOC) become extended. Russia had a huge population three times that of Germany. The Germans needed to look at the situation in the east differently than they had viewed the situation in the west. A quick win would be much harder to come by in Russia.

Planning Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia, began almost immediately after France fell. Extensive wargames were carried out on multiple versions of the plan the best one having been conducted by General Paulus. Paulus' wargame concluded that

logistic shortfalls and exhaustion would occur west of Smolensk⁹³. He recommended a pause to regroup along the Minsk line of advance. His concerns were swept under the rug and plans were made to win the war in a single six-month campaign season⁹⁴.

Barbarossa settled on committing the main effort in the center along the traditional Warsaw - Smolensk - Moscow invasion route. The opening thrust would destroy a large portion of the Red Army in the Bialystok Pocket. Beyond Bialystok the objectives were vague; Leningrad, Moscow, or the Ukraine⁹⁵?

The purpose of Operation Barbarossa was to destroy the Red Army west of the Dneper-Dvina River Line and conquer European Russia. An Army Group in the north would advance through the Baltic States towards Leningrad where they would link up with Finnish forces and encircle the city. An Army Group in the center, the main effort, would advance north of the Pripet Marshes to destroy the flower of the Red Army in the Bialystok salient by conducting consecutive encirclements at Minsk and Smolensk. Another Army Group would advance south of the Pripet Marshes to seize Kiev and capture the Ukraine. A reserve of 24 divisions, 2 of which were armored, would be under Army control. The final line was to extend from Archangel to the Sea of Azov⁹⁶.

Leeb would command Army Group north which consisted of two Armies and one Panzer Group 1 under General Hoeppner. Army Group Center fell under Fedor von Bock. It consisted of two armies and two Panzer Groups, Panzer Group 2 under Heinz Guderian and Panzer Group 3 under Herman Hoth. Army Group South fell under Gerd von Rundstedt. It consisted of three armies, one Rumanian army, and Panzer Group 4 under Kleist.

Preparations were to be completed by 15 May but in April German plans were upset when trouble broke out in Yugoslavia. The collaborationist government of Yugoslavia was overthrown and the axis alliance was rejected. Hitler launched a punitive invasion that delayed Barbarossa by 3 weeks⁹⁷.

Yugoslavia's army was in a cordon defense that took only two German armies to break. The invasion lasted from 6 to 14 April and German casualties were under 600. The invasion of Greece began the same day and ended on 30 April. Neither mission was crucial to Barbarossa. This was an early sign of hyperactivity that led to unintended outcomes in Russia. The Balkan excursion took critical time away from Barbarossa, time that would allow winter to set on the Germans⁹⁸.

The new invasion date was June 22 1941. The Germans would now have three to four months to win. Based on past successes, they thought this would be plenty of time. Germany had amassed three million men in 162 divisions ready to strike.

The Russians pursued the same tired path previously traveled by the Polish and the French. They massed on their border. Marshal Budenny commanded a Front, or Army Group, south of the Pripet Marshes. Marshal Timoshenko commanded a Front north of the Pripet Marshes running up to Lithuania. He was to cover the Moscow Axis. Marshal Voroshilov Front defended the Baltics. The three fronts consisted of 3 million men in the field and another million dispersed elsewhere. Reserves were plentiful but the Russians were not worried about rallying them since Stalin could not conceive that his new ally would turn on him⁹⁹.

When Hitler struck, the enemy was caught totally by surprise. Once again, German opportunism paid off. The initial attacks were wildly successful. Within six months

Germany would overrun the Ukraine, seize the Crimean Peninsula, cut the railroad to Murmansk, and *almost* capture Moscow. The objectives taken were nice but irrelevant. The only German hope was Moscow but it eluded them due to a lack of operational aim. In fact, neither side had a strategic plan¹⁰⁰.

At 0300 on 22 June 1941 the invasion began. By 1 July the two Panzer Groups under Bock had closed a ring around Minsk and captured 290,000 prisoners. They were in a position to secure the dry route to Moscow between the Dvina and Dneper Rivers. In the north, Leeb destroyed 15 divisions west of the Dvina and was driving on Leningrad. The only trouble spot was in the south where Rundstedt was bogged down south of the Pripyat Marshes.

The plan would continue as scheduled although the deep objectives were not clear. Leeb thought Leningrad was the objective, Rundstedt thought it was the Ukraine, and the General Staff and Bock thought it was Moscow. Add to the confusion the increasing problems of extended LOC's, a widening front, and a growing gap between the Panzers and the infantry¹⁰¹. The tanks created the Kesselschlachts but it took infantry to reduce them and secure the armies flanks but the Panzer leaders were not willing to wait.

By 19 July Army Group Center had closed on Smolensk and had netted another 100,000 prisoners although they never managed to close the *Kessel* or Cauldron. Guderian was in too much of a rush to continue the attack to the east to dedicate forces to closing the Smolensk pocket. It fell on Hoth to close the pocket while under pressure of repeated counterattacks.

Army Group Center was experiencing problems while Army Group North and South were beginning to grind down. Difficult terrain in the north hindered Leeb's advance and

the funnel effect caused him concern as to his southern flank. Army Group South was meeting increasingly stiff resistance south of the Pripet Marshes. Both needed help.

On 21 August any operational context the Germans may have had fell apart outside of Smolensk. The German main effort was emasculated to exploit opportunities in the north and south. The remaining force was rendered immobile, spread out, and stuck with a bleeding ulcer in the form of the still open Smolensk pocket. The Russians knew what a huge threat that Army Group Center posed and dubbed the sudden inactivity in that critical sector as the “miracle”¹⁰².

Army Group Center had to halt facing a wide-open route to Moscow. Hoth was to go north to support Leeb’s encirclement of Velekiye Luki and to protect their southern flank. Guderian was to withdraw from the Dneper and backtrack to Gomel to assist Army Group South in an encirclement of forces around Uman in the Ukraine. This left the Smolensk pocket open and caused Army Group Center to grind to a halt trying to reduce it and allowed the Russians to prepare defenses around Moscow.

The operation in the north failed but Uman netted over 600,000 prisoners and seemed to justify the diversion¹⁰³. Tactically, the mission was a tremendous success but operationally it was a disaster. The main effort was brought to a dead halt on the verge of an operational breakthrough. Panzer Groups 2 and 3 were virtually exhausted, their trip south and back wore out Guderian’s tanks. The time lost was a critical six weeks, which allowed the Russian winter to bear down; it was known that the campaign season was May to October. The Russians used the time to stiffen the defense of Moscow just as the British had done at Dunkirk. It is strange that German hyperactivity always seemed to breakdown on the verge of victory. In short, the Smolensk cognitive

operational breakdown accelerated their culmination while costing them six weeks that might have been dedicated to reconstitution and continuation of the attack towards Moscow.

Stalin stayed in Moscow and he was the embodiment of Soviet willpower¹⁰⁴. A virtually unopposed advance on Moscow gave the Germans the ability to seize the decision-making mechanism. They also might have seized the strategic space west of the Urals where the Soviets trained and equipped and deployed their new armies through the communications hub at Moscow.

The orders for Moscow, Operation Typhoon, did not come until the end of September. Within the first week of Typhoon the Germans netted 650,000 troops at Bryansk and Vyazma. On 7 October the rains began and the advance bogged down. By 20 October the Germans had taken Mozhaisk, the last town before Moscow. By November Army Group North had no reserves left and their infantry divisions were down to 65% strength while the Panzer divisions sank to 33 - 50% strength, culmination had been passed¹⁰⁵.

The temperature dropped to -40 degrees and the supply system was straining under Partisan attacks precipitated by the German behavior as conquerors versus liberators. The army lacked winter clothing and lubricant. On 1 December the German drive stalled 25 mile outside of Moscow. On 6 December, the Russians counterattacked. On 8 December the Army High Command authorized the Army to go on the defensive.

German reliance on tactical patterns to achieve strategic goals failed in Russia. Unlike in Poland or France; the Russian Theater was vast, the enemy was determined and annihilating general engagements were impossible. Guderian's hyperactive lunges east coupled with the high command's lack of operational aim added miles of wear and tear

on a rapidly shrinking supply of tanks. The diversion to Gomel added 400 miles. Guderian exhausted his army in Russia just as Rommel had in Africa. The two spiritual founders of Blitzkrieg failed on an operational level. These men reflected their operationally bankrupt system. They were tough and determined fighters who led from the front but it is doubtful that any of them, accept Rundstedt, could conduct war on the level of Patton, MacArthur, or Eisenhower. This is not a declaration of American superiority, it is an affirmation of Nazi operational ignorance in WWII.

The USA Today

In his January 1991 State of the Union address President George Bush ushered in the “new world order” signifying the end of the bipolar cold war world. Harry Summers stated in his book, *The New World Strategy*, that not since the time of the Roman Empire had the world been so dominated by a single power¹⁰⁶. The decrease in tensions instigated a global military draw down redirecting defense dollars into national economies. This *adaptation* to new conditions was logical and necessary but has it gone far enough or has it gone too far? Does the new force structure *anticipate* the future of war? Are operational commanders able to conduct successive operations and are successive operations even considered likely? Can the United States maintain its power or will its power disintegrate as it did in Rome?

The statistics of the post-Cold War draw down of 1989 to 1999 are sobering. The military budget has dropped from 26.5% of the federal budget to 14.6%. Total personnel has dropped from 3.3 million to 2.2 million¹⁰⁷. The cuts are reminiscent to the post WWII, pre Korea, cuts introduced by the Truman administration. The Truman cuts

effected equipment, infrastructure, and training and were blamed by many for America's poor performance early in the Korean War.

Today's force is smaller than at any time since 1939. A summary of cuts since 1992 is illuminating starting with personnel reductions, 709,000 active component troops and 293,000 reserve component troops. The Army lost 8 divisions while the Navy and Air Force lost 20 Wing's, 2,000 combat aircraft, and 232 bombers. The Navy also lost 12 submarines, 4 Aircraft Carriers, and 121 Surface Ships. The US fleet is down to 330 ships from 600 is experiencing a 26% increase in sea time since '92. Lastly, the Air Force lost 500 ICBM's.

The impact of budget cuts on personnel has been drastic in terms of a lack of competitive pay that has created an exodus away from the military. Retention and recruiting are down. The planned draw down of the '90's has not lost momentum in spite of efforts to break the fall. The impact can be seen in the rapid decline in soldier morale; less than of all enlisted soldiers are satisfied with life in the military and officer satisfaction has dropped 20 percentage points over the past seven years¹⁰⁸. The troops are losing heart today just as the Roman legions did in the twilight of the empire.

Manning the force to prevent the "hollow Army" effect is a challenge. The 180th Transportation Battalion of Fort Hood is a prime example. The unit is at 65% strength in drivers and 80% strength in mechanics¹⁰⁹. The navy's newest aircraft carrier, the Harry Truman, has deployed short "hundreds" of slots¹¹⁰. The problem effects all services; the army is facing a 10,000 man shortage in the year 2000¹¹¹, the navy is short 22,000 sailors now and has only a 19% retention rate of carrier trained pilots, while the Air Force is short of pilots and mechanics. The navy has announced that it will recruit non high

school graduates and the Secretary of the Army has proposed to do the same¹¹². Representative Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania calls it ludicrous to place GED educated personnel into the “digitized army” and that it sends the wrong message, “quit school and join the army¹¹³. ”

As alarming as retention is, recruiting is even more ominous since this reflects the growing gulf between the military and the people. Recruiting of young white males, the majority of the pool, has dropped to an all time low. BG P. Sutton, Commander of the USAF Recruiting Service, notes that fewer than 6% of Americans under 65 have served in the military today and that the number of veterans in congress has dropped from 66% to barely 33%¹¹⁴.

The loss of trained specialists is attributed to exhaustion and lack of competitive pay. General Shelton, the CJCS, sites pay as the top problem for all services¹¹⁵. Last year's pay raise was 3.6%, above the Presidents target. Recruiting fell and the specter of a hollow army loomed. This year the President authorized a pay raise of 4.4% and introduced a defense budget increase of \$4 billion with an extra \$8 billion coming from savings. Congress raised the proposal to \$20 billion, less the Pentagon \$112 billion request¹¹⁶.

The pay problem is so acute that it prompted Senator John McCain to state, “It is incomprehensible to the American people, who expect a well trained and equipped force, to witness military personnel - up to 25,000 - on food stamps.” Declining relative pay coupled with personnel cuts and accelerating operational OPTEMPO has combined to convince many to quit and few to join. Soldiers are being paid comparatively less to do more. A sergeant in the army was cited as an example; he replaced a civilian whose slot

was cut and who was paid more than double for the same work. Over a nine-year career, the soldier served in Somalia, Germany, Haiti, Egypt, Korea and ended up divorced.

The impact of OPTEMPO cannot be overemphasized. From 1949 to 1989, the US deployed its forces away from their bases 10 times. From 1989 to 1999 that number jumped to 30¹¹⁷! Open-ended commitments like the no fly zone over Iraq and peacekeeping in Bosnia are exhausting the forces. Admiral Jay Johnson, the Chief Naval Officer, stated, "...we have simply been working everyone too hard." Service members and their families are burning out. Army LTG Ohle commented on the danger of soldier-family burn out when observing that "You enlist a soldier but you reenlist a family"¹¹⁸.

OPTEMPO is effecting equipment since the transition to a continental based force. Troops are not forward deployed. They have to fly or sail to meet current mission requirements. The post Desert Storm C130 / 141 fleet of 200 aircraft dropped to an operational readiness rate as low as 10 aircraft. The lack of flying time generated a lack of qualified pilots to execute airdrop missions. The situation almost grounded the 82nd Airborne Division's mission to Haiti. Only after an accelerated training and maintenance program did TRANSCOM manage to meet mission requirements.

The crumbling infrastructure is also growing. A Fort Hood tour found the barracks, headquarters, and motor pools in a state of disrepair. The troops were living and working in substandard conditions with obvious implications on morale¹¹⁹.

Training and equipment are in decline. The Marines are cannibalizing their aging CH-47 fleet to keep them flying¹²⁰. The air force is running out of air launched cruise missiles according to reports during Operation Allied Action in Kosovo and the Navy is down to 2000 Tomahawk sea launched cruise missiles. Training is suffering as stated in

the testimony of Colonel John D. Rosenberger, Commander of the 11th ACR at the National Training Center (NTC) when he noted a rapid decline in combat training and effectiveness across the force based on his experience at the NTC¹²¹. It echoed by the GAO study that of the poor level of training of infantry squads in the 10th Mtn Division.

According to John Hillen, the US two major theaters of war strategy is “one gigantic bluff.” A GAO study conducted in 1998 would tend to support his conclusion. It found that five second echelon divisions were deficient. It found that 24 of the 10th Mtn Divisions 164 Infantry Squads were below minimal manning and 25% of the remaining 138 squads were not qualified on their wartime tasks. Another highlight came from the 1st Infantry Division where one Brigade was short 50% of its Bradley mounted infantry¹²².

Can the US military carry out its duties in light of the post cold war change? In 1989 the policy of containment and forward presence was overtaken by a policy of CONUS based force projection and a return to the strategic offensive. The 1993 Department of Defense Bottom-Up-Review recommended a “small but powerful and highly mobile conventional military force capable of protecting world wide vital interests¹²³.” These forces were to be empowered with precision guided munitions (PGM’s) and characterized by information dominance and perfect situational awareness¹²⁴.

According to the Strategic Assessment of 1998 conducted by the Institute for National Strategic Studies predicts that the US can expect to retain military dominance for at least 20 years. In the first decade of the next millennium the US will face a proliferation of minor threats posed by small hostile states armed with weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Non nation state terrorists such as Osama Bin Laden constitute another threat.

The long-term threat includes China and the reemergence of old enemies such as Japan and / or Germany. Finally, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) may arise in a resurgence of nationalism and a desire to recapture past glory. The assessment concludes that perceptions of US aversion to casualties is real and is dangerous and may incite bold action by rivals. The report cites the Chinese belief that the US would lose Operation Desert Storm due to its lack of ability to sustain casualties. The study states that the US security must be based on military strength, transparency, communication, and engagement at many levels¹²⁵.

The Army XXI and the future Strike Force are today's concepts to answer the above questions. The Army / Air Force Warfighter brief outlines some of the basic concepts behind the new force. Both the Army XXI and the Strike Force are to be decisive upon entry into theater with low sustainment requirements. They are to possess "overmatching" combat power¹²⁶. Army XXI is to optimized to shape and win the close fight within offensive orientation that is capable of precision maneuver, engagement, and attack. It will use shared situational awareness, decisive action, rapid maneuver, and precision fires, to win in compressed time¹²⁷. The force is highly technical in nature and is tactically focused on decisive battles of annihilation.

We are not there yet so what about now? The US emphasis on quick, painless victory, is evident when the escalation of "Tomahawk Diplomacy" and Air Strike Strategy. Cruise missiles and US planes have struck Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Bosnia, Desert Fox-Iraq, and now Kosovo. These strikes have an opportunistic air to them based on the dubious nature of the August '98 strikes on Afghanistan and the Sudan. The strike in Afghanistan did not kill any of the key Bin Laden staff and the strike in Sudan was

discredited by the CIA¹²⁸. The strikes have been indecisive and may even tempt adversaries to strike.

The US military of the late '90's reflects many of the illnesses of the Roman military in the 4th and 5th Centuries. Boring and extended frontier duty, the central positioning of forces, reduced compensation, a growing civil-military divide, and reduced quality of recruits. We are also paralleling the Germans in our newfound technocratic emphasis. We are opportunistic in execution as evidenced by the careless escalation of operations in Somalia. We are hyperactive in action based on the escalation of deployments over the past decade and we are losing appreciation for operational art. Our use of Tomahawks and our doctrine of quick, decisive victory, coupled with the destruction orientation of precision guided munitions shows a desire to pursue strategic goals through tactical means. Our aversion to prolonged conflict and aversion to casualties is becoming legendary among our foes.

It is certainly not too late to reverse the trends. Purges and doctrinal reversals immediately before WWII ravaged the Russian Army. Stalin eliminated 3 of 5 marshals, 13 of 15 army commanders, 8 of 9 admirals, 50 of 57 corps commanders, 154 of 186 divisional commanders, for a grand total of 36,000 army officers and 3,000 navy officers. In 1940, not one of the 226 division commanders in the army was Frunze Academy trained¹²⁹. The army went through multiple permutations of mechanization and was only half equipped when Germany invaded. The Russians recovered in one year by rediscovering their operational roots. If the Strategic Assessment is accurate, we have twenty years to recover.

Analysis

“We couldn’t mount operation Desert Storm today, or even come close¹³⁰. ”

John Hillen

*Senior Fellow for political-military studies at the
Center for Strategic and International Studies*

Clausewitz provides a framework for critical analysis, *Kritik*, which is based on three steps; discovery of the facts, tracing effects to causes, and investigation and evaluation of means employed¹³¹. The focus is not on what happened but on what *might* have happened and what means *might* have been used. War effects “seldom result from a single cause; there are usual concurrent causes¹³². ” Clausewitz’s *Kritik* is systems analysis.

Cohen and Gooch offer useful parameters for analysis; the ability to *adapt* and the ability to *anticipate*. I have added the application of *operational art*. The analysis searches for signs of effective adaptive behavior, anticipation, and the application of operational planning. It is asserted at the beginning of this paper that the U.S. is attempting an unprecedented feat, to maintain global hegemony and perpetuate freedom from general war. Our advantage is 3,500 years of history from which to draw lessons. Will the U.S. follow the Roman path of disintegration or the German path of technical and tactical dependence devoid of operational context or will the U.S. prevail where they failed?

A complex environment consists of multitude of agents that interact with each other and the external environment. As the situation changes, the agents change within the context of the systems aim. An adaptive organization is able to respond to unintended

outcomes in a coordinated and effective manner. It is more likely to avoid disaster. This is the ability to adapt¹³³. Agents that don't adapt properly fail.

The US military's first attempts to adapt to the New World Order were downsizing and budget cuts. Force reduction is common when the threat diminishes. Units were eliminated and installations were closed. Personnel were invited to leave and exit incentives were offered. Defense budget money was re-channeled into the economy. This is in accordance with US history and world history. America traditionally cuts its defense structure following successful termination of conflicts as the Romans did at the outset of Pax Romana.

America shifted from a forward based army to a home based, force projection, army. The adaptation was codified in the 1993 FM100-5. This change was probably unavoidable but may have long term consequences. As in Rome when the front line troops withdrew into the central reserve, the frontier became vulnerable and tempting to enemies. The "frontier" troops left on the borders felt isolated and became exhausted while awaiting the arrival of the main force.

When Gen. Franks, Commander of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), ushered in an intense technical upgrade to compliment force projection. Battle labs night vision enhancement, precision guided munitions (PGM), and digitization were specifically upgraded. The effort includes off the shelf procurement from business, research and development, and field-testing. Advanced Warfighter Experiments (AWE) began in simulation and expanded into combat training center testing. It is logical to inject technology to leverage downsizing and this adaptation seems logical. Capabilities

based forces may encourage military hyperactivity following the logic that if we can, we will. The escalation of “Tomahawk Diplomacy” is an indicator of this tendency.

America is following the same course that Rome did during Pax Romana. Our adaptation to the New World Order is appropriate in terms of development of capabilities although it may have long term detrimental effects in terms of mass. If situations remain small as in Panama, Iraq, Bosnia, Haiti, and Kosovo, then we are in acceptable shape.

The nagging question is whether the military can continue to perform its mission in accordance with Title 10 of the US Code, the National Security Strategy, and National Military Security Strategy. These state that the US military must be able to fight and win two, near simultaneous major theater wars (MTW) as well as other small scale contingencies. Indicators of problems have surfaced in Kosovo with the attrition of cruise missiles, difficulty in deploying AH64's, and reluctance to commit ground troops with ongoing commitments in Korea, the Sinai, Kuwait, and Bosnia facing the nation.

Some environments are fraught with predictable dangers yet disaster strikes anyway. This occurs when organizations fail to predict hazardous situations that should be recognized. The system exhibits this behavior when the threat of danger is not experienced or its probability is disbelieved or discounted. This is failure to anticipate¹³⁴.

Although the adaptation discussed above seems appropriate, anticipation of second and third order consequences seems less clearly successful. The impact of eroding levels of compensation, personnel shortages, and a widening gap between the military and its people are becoming evident.

The erosion of compensation and benefits has encouraged service members to get out and has discouraged civilians from coming in. Anyone with technical skills or who

aspires to higher education or high salaries gets out or avoids coming in. The military is growing increasingly separated from its society. As in Rome, the military is no longer seen as a vehicle of social mobility. This is an unintended outcome.

America also failed to anticipate the threat environment. The fall of the Soviet Union ended the cold war and promised a calmer world. Instead it unleashed a global wave of nationalism, ethnic hatred, and freed regional despots to pursue actions that would have been restrained by the former super powers. There is no more fear that every small war can escalate into a nuclear exchange. Trouble ensued in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Rwanda, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Kosovo, not to mention the persistence of the North Korean threat. Demand has increased but the supply of forces has declined.

The CONUS based policy has implications as well. Like Rome's central reserves, the need to move forces to hot spots wears down transportation, troops, and costs millions of dollars while the fringes of democracy are ravaged. The tempo is wearing out our troops and equipment and the small wars are depleting our munitions and supplies. Representative Duncan Hunter of California stated in congress that the Marine Corps is short \$193 million dollars worth of ammunition, the Army is short \$3.2 billion dollars worth of ammunition, and the armed forces, together, are short \$13 billion dollars worth of ammunition. He adds that if you add in the shortage of spare parts, the deficit expands to \$28.7 billion dollars. The means applicable to the ends are rapidly declining.

The application of *operational art* is an outward display of will and power. It embodies the cognitive ability to conduct successive operations over time and space¹³⁵. It renounces the tactically oriented decisive battle of annihilation. While the tactically oriented force cannot fail, the operational force gains strategic objectives through a series

of successes as opposed to winning a general engagement. It takes time, depth, and professionalism to accomplish.

Planning in depth includes determination of the aim as related to the political end state and assessment of operational reach to determine where culmination might occur. It includes a systems analysis to clarify COG's and the DP's that leverage them. Branches and sequels are planned to add depth and flexibility.

The current force structure lacks the depth to sustain successive operations particularly if multiple theaters "go hot" at the same time. What if we lose or end up in stalemate in the first series of engagements? If Korea, Kosovo, and Iraq required troops at the same time it is questionable if we could effectively reply. General Reimer stated that a multiple theater situation would require a major shifting of troops and possibly would incur higher casualties.

Army doctrine over emphasizes prompt and "decisive" action. It is short war oriented, firepower based, technocratic, and emphasizes the battle of annihilation. What little space is devoted to operational art is clinical and lacks passion. Schoolhouse problems emphasize general engagement scenarios that attain strategic objectives. Field Manual examples are drawn from decisive battle missions like Just Cause and Desert Storm.

Military operations in this decade seem to lack branch and sequel planning. The initial movement into Haiti by the Harlan County lacked any contingency planning in the event a mob clogged the pier. The post conflict sequel to Operation Just Cause was hastily thrown together and Operation Desert Storm had no exploitation or post conflict sequels planned.

The concept papers coming out on the Strike force, Army XXI, and Army After Next are focused on decisive action, technical overmatch, superior firepower, and improved mobility. The papers emphasize tactical excellence and add to the decline of operational cognizance.

The US Army is capable of conducting operations based on its doctrine and history but its operational awareness is in decline. Digitization, the promise of perfect situation awareness, and precision weapons has encouraged a technocratic disposition in today's leaders. Many believe that the new equipment abrogates the need for operational art.

A summary of current and pending problems is listed below:

- Draw down puts military strength at approximately 50% of 1988 levels.
- Eroding benefits make military service less attractive.
- Impending personnel shortages lead to a “hollow” force.
- Lower quality of recruits may lead to a breakdown in discipline.
- A growing civil military divide is evident as fewer American's are connected to the armed services.
- Declining training budgets lead to lower tactical proficiency.

The essence of the Roman failure was the erosion of the army to a point where it could no longer fulfill its duties. The army and the people drifted apart. Service was no longer an honor, it was servitude, and it was no longer a means of social mobility but rather was a shackle preventing personal betterment. The army was poorly paid, trained, and equipped. The Romans reverted to a central reserve strategy as opposed to the cordon defense and weakened the frontiers exposing them to the ravages of periodic

barbarian invasions. The U.S. has followed the same path in the post cold war era. It took the Romans several centuries to collapse. Due to the acceleration of history due to technology, America probably doesn't have that much time to reverse this trend.

The German failure was rooted in over reliance on technological and tactical superiority. They expected to attain strategic goals through tactical means. The operational step of linking successive operations over time was neglected in favor of tactical hyperactivity and opportunism. The cognitive tension between the tactical level and the strategic level was broken as the current realities of the battlefield over rode long term intermediate objectives. Operational art was not codified in doctrine or on the battlefield. The German Army lacked the depth required to execute coherent successive operations. Today's U.S. Army is experiencing many of these same deficits. We rely on technical and tactical superiority to overcome our foes and we lack the physical depth to extend combat over time and space. We now must win early and quickly in a single set of tactical engagements. We lack the capacity to conduct successive operations and lack the mental cognition to apply operational art.

The United States is adapting to the New World Order. It is natural that this adaptation would go through fits and starts. We have neither succeeded nor failed. We are continuing to adapt and anticipate. Our failure to anticipate the future environment is forgivable and repairable but our failure to anticipate the consequences of our own actions is less easy to overlook. The erosion of benefits, wear and tear on the force projection CONUS based military, and impact of falling budgets should have been

foreseen. We must now adapt, retroactively, to reverse the alarming trends emerging today. The United States can muster the industrial and financial means to maintain its power. When properly motivated, it can display the will to ensure its desires are honored and when the military is once again big enough to consider successive operations, its cognizance of operational art will return.

Conclusion

“The idea that great advances in the technology of warfare inevitably led to shorter wars was held by many generations but falsified by many wars.”

“Whereas a forty year peace is not unique is not unique, a eighty year peace will require the presence of unusual peace making factors¹³⁶.”

Geoffrey Blainey
The Causes of War

To maintain the peace the nation must maintain agreement about its relative power to the rest of the world¹³⁷. To maintain hegemony the nation must maintain its honor in the world. Both of these require a credible force combined with the will and ability to use it. The first decade of the New World Order has proven that the military must be large enough to handle multiple active fronts, concurrently, on opposite ends of the globe. It also must prepare for long conflicts even though short wars seem to be the current norm. The rise of ethnic rivalry and nationalism makes long term general war a growing probability. The world's borders are shifting to adjust to the post cold war world.

Today's Army is the smallest it's been since 1939, about one half of our 1988 strength. This force, even when leveraged with new technology, may be too small to fight and win an extended war or multiple concurrent short wars. There is a certain quality in quantity that can be seen in history, Germany versus Russia in WWII and Japan

versus China in the same war. The doctrine of decisive operations upon arrival leaves little room for error. If the US does fails in initial operations, culminates earlier than expected, or meets other difficulties, it will need greater depth in the form of combat ready formations. Technology can only do so much against mass and depth. The Serbs are increasing troops strength and preparation in Kosovo after nearly a month of bombing.

America must remedy the military compensation problem and enhance its stature among the public as a vehicle of social mobility. This will not occur at current pay levels or with the acceptance of non high school graduates into service. Following the Gulf War, the military was hailed as America's Team and was ranked on the top of public opinion polls as a profession. America's Team was seen as competent and as the home of some of America's best and brightest. The ability to perform the mission successfully was the direct reason for this enhanced stature. Consequently, quality training should be high on the list of priorities. Rome's military failed due to loss of status with the people, declining training and proficiency, degradation of the quality of the force through integration of less disciplined troops, and eroding benefits and compensation to the legions. The United States can not repeat these mistakes.

Over reliance on technology may fail when the force becomes physically over extended¹³⁸. The technocratic focus should be on enhancement of military capabilities rather than replacement basic warfighting skills. Tactical hyperactivity and opportunism are direct results of over selling technical superiority¹³⁹. Both should be replaced by operational planning in the form of prepared branches and sequels. Germany failed in

Russia in 1941 when they ignored culmination and indulged in tactical hyperactivity by diverting forces into opportunistic situations that were operationally irrelevant.

The current emphasis on peacekeeping and other non-combat missions should be viewed as transitory or as an augmentation to the overall goal of being able to win general wars. Operational art should be at the forefront of military doctrine and leader development. Military manuals should expand the discussion of operations and should emphasize past successive operations environments. Just Cause and Desert Storm provide excellent limited war examples but fall well short of being instructional in the conduct of general war. Vicksburg, the Atlanta Campaign, Europe 1944, and the Pacific Theater in WWII would provide better operational examples of missions over time. In short, doctrine should renounce the concept of attaining strategic goals through tactical actions.

If the opponent is militarily weak, lacks will, or is confined to a small theater, then tactical means can attain strategic goals through simultaneous, nonlinear, distributed operations such as in Operation Just Cause. If the enemy is weak but in a large theater then sequential, linear, distributed operations may be required such as in Operation Desert Storm. These are cases for limited wars of destruction¹⁴⁰. If the enemy is materially strong, willful, has manpower, or is dispersed in a difficult theater, then an operational approach is required. Success must be attained through a series of linked small victories.

The CONUS based force is similar to Constantine's Central Reserve and Mobile Strike Force. This places forces too far away to respond to the frontier, exhausts the troops, and wears down the equipment while exposing the frontier to abuse¹⁴¹. Operation

Allied Action began and within six days the Serbs had driven out over 100,000 Kosovars, pushing them into adjacent nations where they may probably become a destabilizing influence. This is not unlike the situation Rome faced when the Huns drove Visigoths into Rome¹⁴². CONUS based forces took 6 months to build up a response to Iraq in Kuwait. Like Kosovo, Kuwait suffered the ravages of the barbarians while waiting. An increase in forward deployed formations or enhancement of strategic lift is in order.

A.A. Svechin summed it up well when he stated that an army organized to win a battle of annihilation, a decisive battle, must be perfect. It cannot make mistakes. If it does it will be unprepared for the future.¹⁴³ An army must be sensitive to the initial period of war and must be ready to transition to a mass war requiring mobilization and industrial capacity. Decisive force failed the Romans in the strategic domain when Alaric was defeated but not deterred. Stilicho ruled the field yet lost the war. He won numerous, transitory, victories but did not defeat the Alaric. Like Tomahawk strikes against Iraq or tactical victories in Vietnam and Somalia; Stilicho's victories generated no lasting effect. The enemy was bloodied but not beaten. Like US Grant in the Wilderness, Alaric knew that there was more to the conflict than victory in a single battle. Eventually, he sacked Rome for the first time in 800 years¹⁴⁴.

Throughout history, Army's have focused on building organizations that can win at the tactical level. They have sought *decisive* forces that *dominate* battlefields. They have sought strategic success through tactical quick victory. Yet, as complexity rises, organizations grow, specialization proliferates, precision and lethality climb, and the chances of delivering a quick, decisive, blow diminish¹⁴⁵. It becomes more and more certain that one battle will not settle the war, it takes two or more, hence; operational art.

Operational art is nothing more than the realization that it takes many small but linked victories to win. It is the realization that tactical success is of little use in isolation. Tactical success must contribute to bigger gains that are tied to strategic goals. The operational domain provides the linkage between tactical execution and strategic success. Perhaps Pax Romana failed due to an innate inability to tie tactical victories together in a manner that would preserve the state while eliminating the external threat.

Today the US is in a similar situation as Rome was in the beginning of Pax Romana. The USSR, our major peer competitor, has fallen, like Carthage or Egypt. Our period of territorial expansion has ended as it did when Rome halted its westward movements into Germany at the Danube and Elbe Rivers. We have become a hegemonic power, relying on influence and trade rather than coercion, and hostile barbarians surround us.

The Romans faced the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Vandals, and the Huns, and the US faces the Iraqi's, North Koreans, and Chinese, to name a few. We also face transnational terrorists like Osama Bin Laden. The nature of these threats seemed nebulous in spite of their omnipresence. Tactical success is easy enough to attain but strategic success is difficult to pinpoint even though the desired end state is clear.

To maintain our power and honor, we must maintain our strength. The military must be powerful and large. To maintain our military we must provide competitive compensation and offer the military as a source of upward social mobility. To keep our force effective, we must keep training. If we have fallen behind, we have time to recover. All indications are that a significant peer competitor will not rise for some twenty to thirty years. This is plenty of time to allow the system to adapt and anticipate

but it begins with the conceptual realization that wars might take time and may need to be won by troops rather than machines.

“...the safety of this nation...cannot lie wholly or even primarily in its scientific or technical prowess¹⁴⁶.”

*J. Robert Oppenheimer
Father of the A-Bomb*

End Notes

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